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Least Bittern

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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A Monthly Magazine for Higher Standards of Outdoor Recreation Through Wildlife Conservation

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Cover Photo

Baby skunks hoist the warning signal as they pose for a picture. Skunks are a help to the farmer in keeping down insect populations.

Photo by Henry S. Mosby

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE gratefully receives for consideration all news items, articles, photographs, sketches and other materials which deal with the use, management and study of Virginia's interrelated, renewable natural resources:

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SOILS — *CONSERVE* — WATER
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J. J. SHOMON—*Editor* R. T. SPEERS—*Associate Editor*

A GUEST EDITORIAL

Virginia Recognizes Need for Game Areas

By M. D. HART

IF YOU WILL run back over your 1920 files of the *American Field* and note the number of dogs registered and the advertisements of professional trainers and handlers, and then get a copy of the *Field* published in 1949 you will get an idea of how the Field Trial Sport has grown.

I have always felt that credit should be given where credit is due and it is my opinion this growth can be rightly attributed to the *American Field* through its publicizing of this grand sport, that has now reached its high pinnacle. The *Field* early realized that pointing dogs occupied a particular niche in dogdom which did not fit in with other species of pet and show dogs; a vision that has materialized beyond the expectations of its founders.

Aside from placing thoroughbred pointing dogs upon its present high pinnacle it was, maybe unconsciously, rendering a great service—viz., creating a spirit of wildlife conservation in advocating the wise use but not abuse of American game birds.

In the days before many of you who read this were born, gentlemen-sportsmen who thought they had the best bird dog to be found anywhere would issue a challenge to any other gentleman who thought his was the best bird dog in the country to run a match for high stakes.

A celebrated match of this kind was run between Phil's Speed Ben and Pennsylvania Rex for $1,000. I recall that Phil's Speed Ben won this match, but not the number of birds that were killed over his points. This custom of matches between bird dogs gradually became discredited because of the fact that field trials presented an opportunity of competing with a large number of dogs where the essentials of nose, brains (bird sense), endurance and range are determining factors as to the superiority of the competing dogs.

The lust to kill found in the untutored bird hunter who attends field trials soon dimmed out. He stopped killing before he bagged the last bird in a covey. He soon began inquiring of his game department as to the seeds he should plant, which he purchases and gives with the money to pay for planting to his non-hunting farmer friends. He has become a true conservationist, attributable to his association with field trial devotees.

It is generally conceded that all species of wildlife over this entire Union are gradually decreasing. Our state game departments are cognizant of this decrease and the key men in these departments are burning the midnight oil to conserve our wildlife resources in order that future generations may enjoy the pleasure of hunting and fishing. They realize in the field trial fraternity, whether training or pointing dogs, there is a type of sportsman who will stand at their right hand in sane comprehensive wildlife conservation and are lending aid in the acquiring of suitable grounds over which such trials may be run.

Virginia has one-and-a-half million acres of public hunting and fishing grounds. The most of this area is in the mountainous parts of the State inhabited mainly by forest game, and this land is unfit for pointing dog trials with the possible exception of grouse.

However, recently through the Pittman-Robertson fund, we have acquired a tract of land of several thousand acres in Orange County as an experimental quail propagation project on which bird dog field trials will be held next November. As this property is developed, it is confidently expected that we will have as many quail as when we ran our trials over at Camp Lee soon after the first World War, when if anything we had too many quail with one brace of dogs finding 18 coveys in an hour's beat.

Our ultimate desire is to raise naturally enough quail to trap and ship to depleted territories and at the same time leave an abundant supply for field trials.—Courtesy *American Field.*

YOUR WATERFOWL

By
ALBERT M. DAY
Director, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

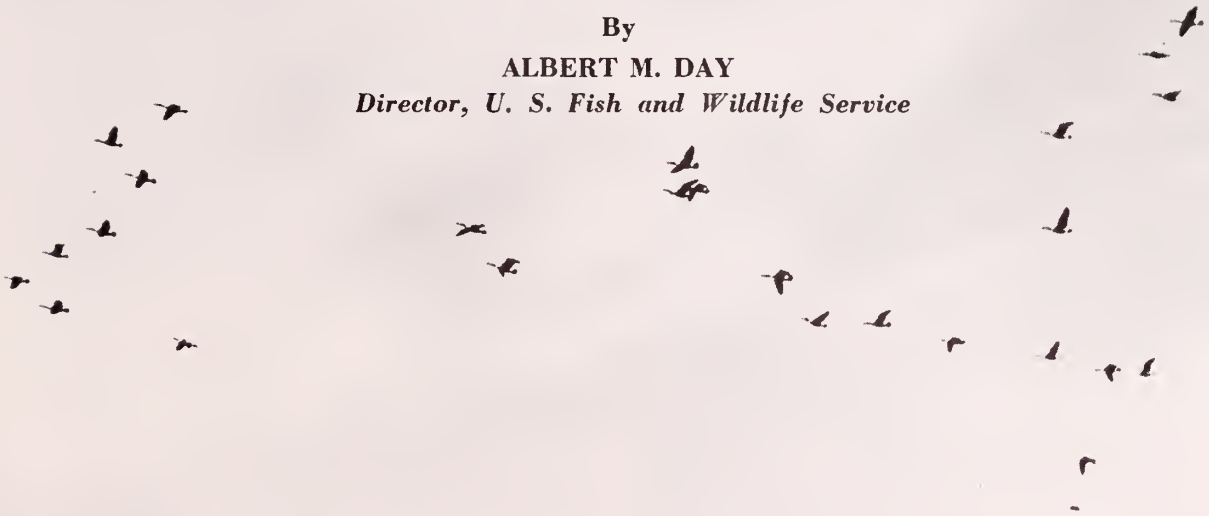


Photo by Crawford

Geese against the sky! A thrilling sight to any sportsman!

The fate of your wildlife depends upon you more than it does upon state and federal conservation agencies. What are you going to do about it?

WE HAVE come a long way in conservation thinking in this country since the days when the wild things of the plains, the forests, and the streams were considered as legitimate prey for the first who could reduce them to possession. The American public now has a much better understanding of the fundamental principles of wildlife protection, preservation, and management. The road has been rough and the progress slow, but year by year, rocks and boulders have been rolled from the trail as enlightened legislation and more generous funds have been made available for the perpetuation of wildlife. But the final chapter has not yet been written. Only Time will prove whether this American democracy of ours can insure for future generations what we and our forefathers have taken as God-given birthrights.

There are some who sincerely feel that hunting and fishing in the United States will eventually follow the pattern of that in England and other European countries. On the British Isles, good hunting and fishing have been maintained for hundreds of years in the midst of dense populations. But there, game and fish belong to the landlords. As such, those folks have a personal interest and they care for and protect wildlife as they do domestic stock. Game is not over-shot, even though surpluses are sold in the public markets. Fishing is never permitted to remove all of the fish from the streams.

But there only the few are permitted to enjoy hunting and fishing. Here in the United States, we have attempted to manage the sport so that it will be available for all—rich and poor alike. In this country, where streams are overrun and crowded with fishermen who fight to see how many can surround a single pool without getting their flies and plugs tangled with those of their elbowing neighbors, the government agencies are supposed to supply enough fish so that each license buyer can get somewhere close to his creel limit every day. If that limit is set at less than 10, there is usually loud and long criticism of the Fish and Game Department. In England, on well-managed streams, two

Virginia Wildlife expresses deep appreciation to author Mr. Day and Stackpole and Heck, Inc., publishers, for permission to reprint this closing chapter of Mr. Day's fascinating book "North American Waterfowl."

Photo by W. H. Mullins

Wildfowl need nesting areas safe from drought, flood, and predation, if they are to produce a new hunting crop.

trout are often considered a reasonable limit. Few streams in the United States can naturally produce the size and quantity of finny trophies that the public expects.

Don't get me wrong! I would be the last to advocate the adoption of the Continental system of hunting and fishing instead of our own type of public participation in this most healthful of outdoor recreations. I am not yet ready to toss in the sponge. I cannot yet subscribe to the philosophy that the end is in sight; that our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren will see no more of the kind of enjoyment that we of this generation have had. I think we can continue to maintain public hunting and fishing in the United States for many years—perhaps forever.

But if we do, the average individual is going to be forced to take a more realistic attitude than is shown by the bulk of the present-day license-buyers. He must be made to realize that wildlife is a product of the soil and water, and that it cannot be manufactured artificially and placed in the fields and streams for his special enjoyment on the day that he happens to have a chance to get away from his office. True, game-farm reared pheasants and quail can supplement the natural supply as can hatchery-raised trout, bass, and sunfish. But the amount that a man pays for his license lacks, by a long way, the cost of producing and liberating artificially-reared game and fish.

To Mr. John Q. Sportsman must come the realization that under our American system game and fish belong to the American public, and they must be maintained not alone for the present but also for future generations. The taking of ducks, geese, quail, rabbits, trout, bass, deer, as well as all other species which are subjected to hunting and fishing laws, should be considered as representative of the American way of life. Pride should not rest in the man who is able to take the most—in the shortest length of time.

I would like to think that most sportsmen are high-minded, decent, law-abiding gentlemen, but many of the cases which come to the attention of administrative agencies certainly leave plenty of room for doubt. Perhaps we get more than our share of the trigger-happy boys who shoot without restraint and without any thought for their neighbors, their fellow-men, and the future of the sport. Perhaps we hear too many tales of the individuals who have no regard for the landowners on whose farms and ranches wildlife is produced, and who deliberately leave gates open, who cut fences, who destroy property, and who even kill chickens, turkeys, and pigs to stow in the trunks of their automobiles to take home as trophies of the hunt. Such things are not rare occurrences. They happen daily, hourly, whenever there is an open season in any state of the Union.

I have been told at some of the public waterfowl meetings which we have conducted throughout the United States that the Fish and Wildlife Service personnel are anti-sportsmen and anti-hunter in their thinking; that they consider nothing except absolute protection of the birds; that the Service would gladly see a complete closed season with no more hunting of any kind.

There is nothing farther from the truth than such assertions.

If we, at times, seem impatient it is because we continually receive a barrage of complaints and criticisms from those few individuals throughout the country who resent the restraints that prevent them from taking more than their share. I have had folks tell me that we should relax the regulations protecting waterfowl because we cannot enforce them; that people feel that they may violate the regulations with impunity because they do not agree with them. We have been told that the restrictions against baiting should be lifted because some folks continue to use bait as a means of taking waterfowl whenever and wherever they can get away with it.

We have been told also, that shooting hours are violated because some persons feel them too restrictive. The philosophy of a too-large majority of hunters is that the regulations should be made to suit their own ideas and their own conveniences rather than for the management of the resource. If that policy were followed for long there would soon be no need to issue protective regulations. There would be nothing left to protect.

The sportsmen of this country contribute substantially and materially to the wildlife management programs. In fact, their dollars finance almost the entire protective structure. State game licenses support the state fish and game departments since only in a few instances do the states contribute any substantial sum from general revenues. The tax on arms and ammunition provides the revenue for the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid program which does so much toward the restoration of all forms of wildlife. The duck stamps provide much of the Federal funds for the waterfowl refuges, for enforcement, and for research. Many individuals maintain private clubs and sanctuaries and contribute to numerous organizations which seek to improve wildlife conditions. Sportsmen and license buyers have a great stake in this conservation program because they finance it. But money, by itself, is not enough.

More than 25 million people in these United States buy hunting and fishing licenses each year. True, many of these are duplicates, but true, also, many others do not buy licenses at all. In the latter group are those who like to take a chance on hunting or fishing without paying the usual fare. Also, there are youngsters who, by state and federal laws, are not required to purchase licenses and duck stamps. In other cases, state statutes provide that land-owners need not buy licenses to hunt on their own properties. Thus it seems that we might take 25 million as the reasonable figure for those people who each year take to the woods and streams. It is utterly impossible for the small group of conservation officers in this country to make law-abiding citizens out of such a mass of hunters and anglers. Observance of the laws and regulations must come from within this group of sportsmen.

The state fish and game departments are now equipped with better personnel than at any time in the entire history of conservation. The Pittman-Roberston program has stabilized the technical staffs of the state administrations and the cooperative units have provided technicians that are doing a splendid job. The Fish and Wildlife Service has, as a heritage, a reputation for sincerity and honesty of purpose. It is equipped and staffed with the best people that can be employed. Your official agencies are attempting, with rare exceptions, to do a first-class job of managing the wildlife resource. Certainly they make mistakes and they will continue

(*Continued on page* 12)

Refuge areas along the flyways are an essential part of wildfowl management. Some birds must get past the gunners to supply next years's brood stock.
Photo by Crawford

O.P.L. Photo by Laurence M. Huey

WHISTLING WINGS

By LYLE HICKS

WHEN I FIRST heard of dove hunting in Virginia I was inclined to be somewhat skeptical. My only previous encounter with doves was picking them off telephone wires with a sling-shot when a boy in Nebraska.

In the first place, I was amazed to learn that this splendid bird was considered as much of a game bird as the native quail or the pheasant I was more used to. It was difficult to believe that hunting doves could afford anything in the way of real sport. I still thought of a dove as just a songbird.

Secondly, I couldn't understand how any bird as tame as the dove could provide anything but dull shooting. In Nebraska doves were so tame that they nested in a large elm tree in our backyard. However, after much persuasion I finally accepted an invitation from a neighbor to go dove hunting. On opening day, I unpacked my twenty-gauge double and we joined the great throngs of hunters that yearly invade the corn fields and woods in search of this popular Virginia game bird.

When we arrived at the field, I became quite discouraged, for here lined throughout the corn field, were more than a dozen hunters. But for the urging of my neighbor to continue with the hunt, I would have unloaded my gun right then and there and returned to town.

The field was large, but gave me a cramped-in feeling, for there were hunters packed in everywhere. I was positive that if we did see any doves, we wouldn't have a chance. There seemed to be just too many hunters.

Woods lined the field on three sides, and remembering that my hunting companion had mentioned that doves could also be found in timber stands, I suggested that we try the trees and get away from the crowd.

He promptly dropped my hopes another notch by telling me that the woods, too, already held their quota of gunners!

The hunters waved and shouted greetings as we passed and seemed glad to see us. I returned their greetings, but wasn't too happy about seeing them. All too often I had watched ducks and geese come in just out of gun range and then have some other hunter scare them off. Now here I was, in a field with a mob of other gunners, waiting for a chance at some dove shooting. "Any dove that comes near here today will just be trying to commit suicide," I commented bitterly to my friend. He just laughed and told me to wait and see.

About fifteen minutes after we got there, scattered shooting broke out along the farther reaches of the field. Just as I stretched to see what was happening, a spiraling, twisting, dodging, diving, bunch of feathers came zooming out of nowhere at about 600 miles an hour—it must have been that fast because I'm sure I missed him by a mile!

"What was that?" I gasped to my friend, when the smoke had cleared.

"That," he said silkily, "was one of those Nebraska wire sitting songbirds that you were telling me about a little while ago. Watch out! Here comes another one!" He swung as he spoke and at the sound of his gun the dove described a neat parabola and bounced into the corn shocks about 40 yards away.

From then on the action was fast and furious,

and I'm forced to admit that my first day shooting doves was one of the most exciting hunting days I've had since I've been old enough to shoulder a gun. I received two great surprises—both pleasing and frustrating. The first surprise was that hunting in a field for doves with many other hunters is not only welcome, but it is almost a necessity. While hunting other birds, I had always been plagued by other hunters being too near and spoiling my day. I discovered that here was a sport where other hunters helped me in getting the limit.

To explain this a bit, hunters in other parts of the field and in the woods set up a cross-fire pattern that kept the doves flying from one point to the other, affording many shots. When the doves lit in another part of the field or in the woods, firing from the hunters there would send them back in flight and they returned to the field.

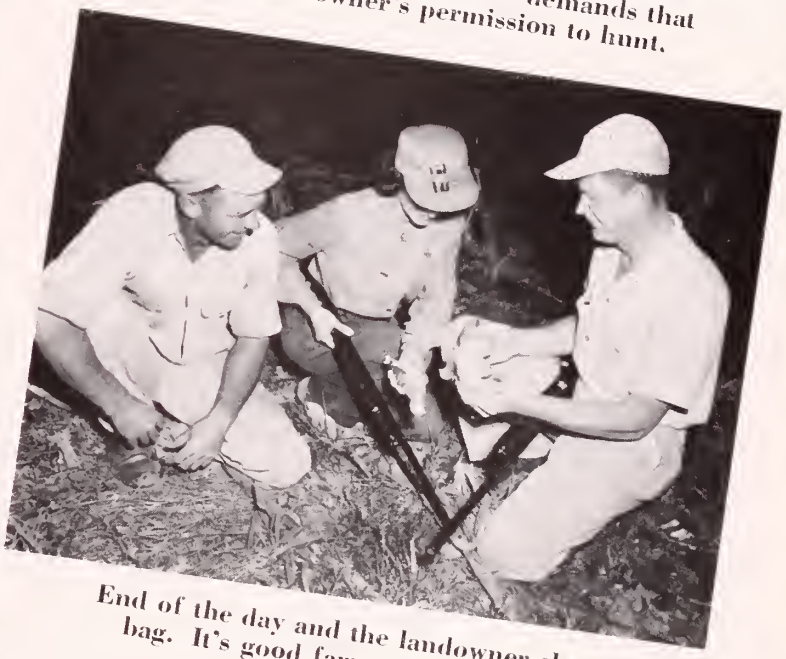
Another thing that I learned was that the dove, with its fast, erratic flight, while at times a little frustrating, offers some of the best shooting of any of the upland game birds. The unique pattern of its flight has made it one of the most sought after game birds. It also makes it one of the most difficult to hit. Alternating speed with craftiness, it will fly straight at you, only to slip to one side as you are about to shoot.

I found also that shooting from my position in the corn field, I had more angle shots than while hunting ducks or geese in Nebraska. The doves would fly straight across from me, and then suddenly shoot up in the air, just as I pulled the trigger. They'd veer off to one side, and then with a tremendous burst of speed change directions, making a hit almost impossible.

Totaling the number of shots I took by the end of the first day, I no longer thought of the dove as the tame little songbird that was so often heard cooing in my backyard. I realized then that the dove is one of the sportiest and gamest of all game birds. Where normally one would average a hit in every three shots while shooting pintails and geese, I found that on doves I made a hit about once in every five shots. I've learned since that day, too, that dove hunters consider a man a good shot if he can bag his limit and use less than a box and a half of shells.

Since that first opening day several years ago, I've done much dove hunting not only in Virginia, but in other sections of the country as well. Since the dove is a migratory bird, I've been able to follow it from Maryland to Florida along the eastern shoreline, and to some extent through Texas and Oklahoma. (*Continued on page* 12)

Common courtesy—and the law—demands that you get the landowner's permission to hunt.



End of the day and the landowner shares in the bag. It's good farmer-sportsman relations.

Game Commission Photos

Dove hunting isn't strictly a man's game! The distaff side of the family gets instructions.

PLANNING FOR PROGRESS

By TED FEARNOW

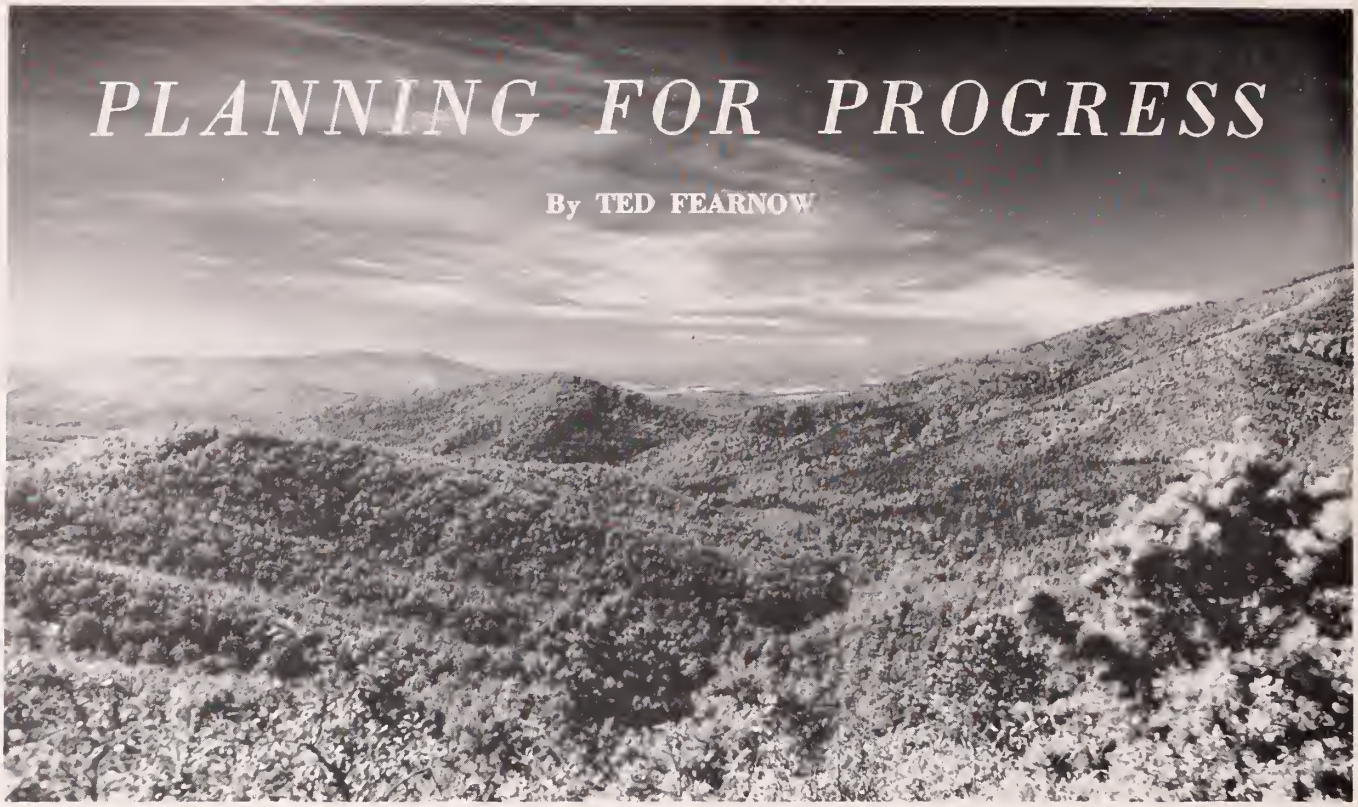


Photo by Crawford

Last month Mr. Fearnow explained in some detail the mechanics of the Cooperative Forest-Game program in Virginia, covering such things as the initial organization, past activities, and the new five-year work plan agreed upon this spring at the Richmond conference. Here he concludes his timely article with a review of the exemplary cooperative effort that has marked the success of the two resource agencies concerned.—Editor

PART II

(Continued from last month)

GREATER emphasis on stream stocking was stressed as a necessity if satisfactory trout fishing is to be maintained on the two Virginia Forests. The current practice of utilizing part of the National Forest wildlife stamp revenue to purchase fish food for Federal hatcheries, in return for which annual allotments of yearling trout are made, is to be continued. This arrangement requires continued operation of fish distribution trucks by both Forests. Already distribution equipment has been modernized through the use of oxygen tanks and removable tank equipment, which releases trucks for work on other activities when the stocking season is over. While many fish are received each year from Federal hatcheries, there has been a growing trend toward dependence on State hatcheries as a source of fish for National Forest waters.

Operation of the cooperative program has required the building of cabins and other administrative structures for occupancy by resident wildlife managers in remote portions of the National Forests. Due to the heavy cost of such structures, it was agreed that expenditures of this type should be made only as a last resort. However, in the case of portable patrol cabins, which serve as overnight shelters for wildlife managers and labor crews working in back country, additional units will be constructed as the program develops. These cabins often pay their way through savings in transportation when wildlife crews are working several days in remote areas.

During the early stages of the cooperative program, large blocks of National Forest land were closed to all hunting to accelerate wildlife restoration. It was agreed by makers of the third five-year plan that areas closed ten years or more should now be re-examined with a view to opening most of them prior to the next hunting season. Discussions emphasized the fact that closing a large area of land in one portion of the Forest steps up hunting pressure on adjacent areas, so that little is gained from long-term closures. Most of these areas are located on the Jefferson National Forest in southwest Virginia.

As a result of joint wildlife efforts by the State and the federal Forest Service officers assigned to the two Virginia Forests, many factors bearing on season and bag limit requirements are constantly becoming apparent. Factors such as poor nesting seasons, scarcity of game food and damage from overpopulations are most obvious to those who are in daily contact with the wildlife resource. These factors need to be considered in formulating regulations on seasons and limits and the new five-year program provides for an annual meeting of personnel active in the National Forest cooperative program to discuss and summarize observations from both National Forests and prepare recommendations. Representatives from the Forests will appear before the Commission each year to present this material in the form of an annual report and recommendations. Recommendations covering the 1950 season have already been submitted by a representative of the cooperative group and adopted by the Commission.

Public relations work has been a most important part of the cooperative program since its inception. Much of the public support which has been evidenced for the cooperative program stems from the continuous effort to keep the public informed of what is being done. The group expressed its appreciation for the fine work being done by Mr. Shomon through the Commission's magazine *Virginia Wildlife* and for contributions by others of the Commission's public relations division. One of the approaching problems recognized by the group is that of preparing public opinion for harvesting antlerless deer when populations have reached the limit of carrying capacity. Many of the leaders in the Virginia program have had previous experience in areas where deer population so ruined wildlife habitat as to bring on starvation of big game along with serious impairment of food and cover for small game animals. With small game occupying a key position in the cooperative program, the importance of preventing any such disaster from occuring in Virginia cannot be overestimated.

A most unusual feature of the cooperative wildlife program and one that has become an important part of the public relations job is the annual series of meetings in which the officers of the Game Commission and U. S. Forest Service appear before gatherings of sportsmen for an annual "progress report." These meetings have provided an opportunity for bringing sportsmen and wildlife administrators together for frank discussion of problems and it is planned that one week of each year, just prior to the hunting season, will be devoted to continuation of this contact work. This will permit two meetings on each Forest annually.

The conference at Harrisonburg for preparation of a new five-year wildlife program illustrates the pattern of cooperation that exists between the U. S. Forest Service and the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries in behalf of sound resource management. The coordinated management program that has evolved on the one-and-one-half million acres of National Forest land in Virginia is one of the best guarantees that future generations of Virginians will continue to have an opportunity to enjoy hunting and fishing that have played such

(*Continued on page 22*)

Public relation work has been a most important part of the cooperative program. Here Forest Service and Commission personnel put on a rountable radio program.

Photo by Crawford

"Show me" trips are popular on the Forests. Here a game official explains the cooperative forest-game work being done in the George Washington National Forest.

Photo by Shomon

WHISTLING WINGS

(*Continued from page* 9)

Along these various flyways, the doves offer a shooting with more zest and appeal than that offered by any other game bird, and more and more hunters are going in for it.

Although the methods used in dove shooting differ greatly from one area to another, the aims and results are much the same. In Maryland, for instance, a great many hunters use decoys, staking them in corn fields to lure the first birds in. Their blinds are made out of cornstalks and are placed about 30 yards from the decoys. In this way, to a great extent, the problem of getting the birds to come into gun range is solved.

In Georgia and Florida, hunters station themselves in patches of woods with a small clearing overhead. This affords great shooting as the doves wing over the clearing, but it is also the most difficult method used. This type of hunting, called pass-shooting, was originally a popular method used on the great hordes of passenger pigeons that inhabited the southern flyways. But with the extinction of the pigeons hunters turned to their wary cousin, the dove, bringing along the same method of hunting.

I have found that in dove hunting in almost any state, a dog is as important in getting the limit as the gun or ammunition. Without the help of a dog, many more birds are killed yearly than are ever found. This means that a man shooting doves without a good retriever is likely to knock down 14 or 15 doves before he bags his limit of 10. This, when multiplied by scores of hunters, totals an alarming number of doves that are wounded and go unfound in the fields, only to die later.

A possible solution for this in Virginia might be to execute a split season. Then, when the second flight of doves comes later in the year, a dog could be taken into the field to retrieve these fallen birds. In that manner, a great many of the doves that are now shot but go unfound could be brought to the hunter, and the dove population in this area could be conserved.

One of the greatest treats of the dove, however, comes with the eating. Baked with a strip of bacon around it, the dark meat of the dove ranks with the best of eating, proving the adage that the best things come in small packages.

The elusiveness, remarkable speed and craftiness, and table quality of the dove are fast making it one of the most sought after of all upland game birds—a bird that more and more hunters are finding irresistible for good hunting and unsurpassed sport.

YOUR WATERFOWL

(*Continued from page* 7)

to do so, both in judgment and in pubic relations. Yet, how can a little handful of officials be expected to do all of the things that are necessary to provide adequate hunting and angling for one out of every five people in the United States?

How many hunters devote even one single day each year in attempting to improve game habitat in the areas where they hunt? How many go out to feed starving game in winter when snows are deep and cold is severe? How many try to do something for the landowner to repay him for the opportunity to hunt on his property? How many are willing to do something on their own for the production and protection of wildlife? How many of your acquaintances think about the needs of the birds instead of their own desires when they buy that license and take a little time off from a busy life to go afield?

Count 'em yourself! You know the people that you associate with—your friends on fishing and hunting expeditions. Compare those real conservationists with the numbers who are willing to arise in every rod and gun club meeting and shout to the high heavens that the state and federal officials are complete and thorough failures and there should be a general overhaul of the official agencies.

The fate of *your* wildlife—of your *outdoor* recreation—depends upon *you* more than it does upon the elected and employed officials of the state and federal conservation agencies. They can make rules and regulations designed to protect the resource—they can do their best to enforce them; but unless you 25 million hunters and fishermen in these United States cooperate and do something on your own, the case will eventually be hopelessly lost.

The chap who shoots more birds than his limit, or who takes more fish than the regulations prescribe is not being smart and fooling the game warden. Instead, he is robbing his son and his son's son of one of the finest things that America has provided for its people. He is helping to bring to an end the success of a plan that has never survived in any other heavily populated country. He is contributing to the downfall of one of the greatest heritages that we have—one that folks all over the world envy and admire. He is not cheating that "nosey game warden"—the wildlife does not belong to him. Rather the man who violates the game laws is cheating those millions of young Dickies and Johnnys and Joes and Georges and Dorises and Marys and Myrtles who would also like some day to take part in that great American experiment.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

CONSERVATIONGRAM

Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners will hold its annual meeting at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis on September 14, 15 and 16. According to I. T. Quinn, executive director, the Virginia Game Commission will take an active part in this conference as well as that of the American Fisheries Society meeting which is being held earlier in conjunction with the Association conference.

J. J. Shomon, chief of the Commission's Education Division, will present a paper, "Education in Conservation from a Wildlifer's Viewpoint," and will then lead an hour's symposium on conservation education. Five outstanding conservationists will serve on the panel with Mr. Shomon. They are: Dr. John W. Scott of the University of Wyoming and chairman of the National Committee on Policies in Conservation Education; Prof. S. W. Allen, professor of forestry and conservation of the University of Michigan; Dr. F. Olin Capps, chief of Information and Education of the Missouri Conservation Commission; Verne Davison, regional biologist of the Soil Conservation Service in Spartanburg, S. C., and Michael Hudoba, Washington editor of Sports Afield and secretary of the Outdoor Writers Association of America.

Dean A. Rosebery, assistant chief of the Fish Division, will present a paper at the Fisheries Society session, entitled "Sport Fisheries Management of Claytor Lake, a Main Stream Impoundment on the New River in Virginia." This paper will fit in with a symposium on reservoir management scheduled to be held on the same day.

COMMISSION PLANS EXHIBIT at the Atlantic Rural Exposition to be held in Richmond September 28 through October 7, it was announced by executive director I. T. Quinn. There will be a forty foot functional educational display, designed to bring the attention of the public to the need of conservation practices. There will be a graphic portrayal of the Commission's five divisions concerned with game, fish, finance, law enforcement, and education. Panels, maps and graphs will describe and explain the salient features of the Commission's long range wildlife restoration program, and the sportsman will be shown by means of diagrams exactly how his hunting and fishing dollar is spent, and how his money is holding the bulwark against misuse of our wildlife resources.

GAME WARDEN SCHOOL: Virginia game wardens and conservation officers will receive a full week of instruction at the second annual session of the Game Warden School at V.P.I. The training course includes such topics as: game law enforcement, court procedure, public relations, conservation education, safety with firearms, first aid, and Commission objectives, policies, and program.

COTTONTAIL INCREASES throughout most sections of the State are being reported by field personnel of the Commission. One game biologist reports that twice as many rabbits are being seen in his district this year, as compared to those of a year ago. Since the rabbit population is known to be very cyclic, it is hoped that these reports indicate another upswing of the cottontail population curve.

WILD TURKEY RESTOCKING plans are going ahead on schedule, according to Game Division chief Chester F. Phelps. Young wild turkeys from the state game farm in Cumberland are being readied for shipment to counties which are deficient in brood stock and where turkey hunting will be closed for five years.

GAME LAW DIGEST DUE OFF THE PRESS. According to Evelyn M. Paris, assistant executive director, 200,000 copies of the digest should be available for distribution by the time this issue of Virginia Wildlife rolls off the press. Requests for copies should be made to Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, 7 North 2nd Street, Richmond, Virginia.

THE DINGELL BILL has passed Congress and has received the President's signature. There was speculation at the last as to whether the Chief Executive would sign it, in view of the war crisis in Korea. More on the passage of the Dingell Bill next month.

V.S.C.C. Photo

Old chisel-tooth himself! Virginia's beavers are water conservationists.

FOR

Making a co
once again ret
valuable furbe

Extinct in Virgi
builder of the
Commission
period.

Now over 40
promises a fu
and farmers.

Left: Skid trail. Cut logs are dragged over this trail to the beaver ponds for use by the colony.

Right: Beaver canal. More ambitions or just lazier? Anyway, floating the logs to the pond beats dragging them!

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Photos

Even beavers make mistakes! Tis too low, had to be moved up to

EST ENGINEER

nback in the Old Dominion, the beaver is
rning to streams that have not known this
e for generations.

Virginia from 1911 to 1932, this master
orst was restored to the state by the Game
it the release of 38 animals over a 6-year

strong in more than 65 colonies, the beaver
r source of revenue to Virginia trappers

U.S. Forest Service Photo

A beaver pond showing the house and dam constructed by the hard working little furbearers.

U.S. Forest Service Photo

This close up of the beaver house shows the mud and stick construction that may tower up to 10 feet high.

S.C.S. Photo

ct was started
mlete the job.

Hard at work! Dam repair is a major project for beavers.

V.S.C.C. Photo

A Farmer Speaks on Wildlife Conservation

By JO VALENTINE

Photo by Kesteloo

WITHIN THE NEXT few years we will all see the end of hunting on the farm. Very true and tragic, and it cannot be avoided. Why? Because there will be no game on the farms to hunt. And the extermination of all the foxes, the prowling cats, the crow and all other predators, including the man with the gun, will not restore it. Neither will the multiflora rose, soil conservation practice or any other well meaning plan thought up by the experts. Each year as I harvest my crops I note with alarm the increasing scarcity of our game and I am to blame, my neighbors are to blame, all farmers are to blame. We all use modern machinery. The tractor, the mower, the combine, the cornpicker and countless other types of implements are here to stay. These are truly a necessity in our production of food. What is the connection between modern machinery and wildlife? The machinery destroys the wildlife habitat. Almost all farmers raise hay. Hay is an essential feed in the production of meat and milk. Hay harvest comes at a time when our wildlife is nesting, and harvesting cannot be put off or the hay will spoil. The mowing machine clips it off clean and the hay rake and hay baler leave the field almost bare, with scarcely enough cover to shelter a mouse. At that time of the season the corn fields are yet in cultivation and are of no benefit at all to game. Also the soybean fields are of no help as they have only been planted a short time. As the summer goes by, what little game nested in the draws and fence rows, will move into the corn and soybean fields as the crops grow big enough to offer shelter. Then soybean harvest and later corn harvest and winter, with no shelter and little feed in the harvested fields. No place to go except to the fence rows along the highways. We all know of the great loss of game killed by automobiles. Game cannot judge speed any faster than it can run or fly. This is the situation and there is no way to retain farm hunting.

But there can be a plan, a huge set-up, whereby we could all have more and better hunting and fishing than we have ever dreamed of.

This same modern machinery has stepped up production to a point where we are overproducing. Through education and the use of lime, fertilizers and scientifically bred seeds, all of us farmers are producing many more bushels per acre than we ever did before and we will continue to do so as science shows us the way.

It is a well known fact that the law of supply and demand creates prices. This vast over production of corn, wheat, cotton, potatoes, tobacco, soybeans and many other items, brought the prices down to a point often below the cost of production. Our government has set a price on commodities,

Jo Valentine is an average farmer in Illinois, farming 160 acres, but he is far above average in his knowledge of the problems of wildlife and in his ideas for correcting them.

considered to be a fair price to the producer in that he may make a fair living and reasonable interest on his investment. This is called a parity price. If as of now, the market price falls below parity the government steps in and makes up the difference between market and parity and this is called a subsidy or support price. Up to now our government has spent many, many millions of your and my dollars—tax money to buy commodities for which it has no use. We producers are the only ones to benefit except what goes to Europe. Of course, we all want to see these war-torn countries rehabilitated and self-sustaining. But as they get into production our foreign markets will diminish and our over production problem will increase.

Also, at the present time there are huge sums of money being made available for draining vast swamp lands and for irrigating deserts, thus bringing into competition with us, many more acres of land when we are already over producing. We here in Illinois have been notified that our wheat acreage would have to be cut down, and that corn and other commodities may follow in 1950. Yet I just read of the Soil Conservation plans to drain the pot holes in the Dakotas to raise more wheat and corn. Makes me think of my cat, when she gets to chasing her tail.

Now, the solution for the farmers, the government, the hunter and fisherman and all of America would be to cut the production on the marginal land only. Marginal land is land of poor fertility and land that is bad to overflow. Many people live on land so poor in fertility that it takes all they can get off it to have a scant living and meet their obligations. Such land should be taken out of production and put down in grass and in forests and lakes and wildlife areas.

As usual this year the papers were full of news about flooding waters in this and that part of the country and of the suffering and damage done. If these upland marginal areas were put down in grass and forests and lakes it would go a long way towards river flood control by holding back the big rains. If the vast areas of drained swamp lands and lakes in the river bottoms were restored, they would help immensely as a shock absorber in storing up flood waters. These drained areas are marginal land also. When the spring floods come the people have to move out and when the water recedes they move back, but often too late to put in a crop and get it matured before a killing frost. We have enough fertile land in our country to take care of our needs without extra crops from the marginal land. Instead of taking out one acre which will raise 100 bushels of corn, why not take out five acres that produce only 20 bushels per acre? If our government would buy up vast tracts of this land and take it out of production, then the law of supply and demand would take over and we producers would get a fair price without taking a subsidy of your money.

Where would the government get the money to finance this undertaking? Our subsidy payment, money to be spent on drainage areas which should not be drained, irrigation money on new proposed projects and many other similar ways. Results would be fair stable prices to both producer and consumer; huge recreational areas for hunting, fishing and wildlife; much needed flood control and much needed training centers to combat both juvenile and adult delinquency, at no extra cost to our national treasury. What about the people moved

(*Continued on page 22*)

Photo by Kesteloo

Modern farming methods leave neither food nor shelter. These wintering quail will have a hard time until spring.

POISON IVY and its poisonous relatives

By A. B. MASSEY
*Botanist, *Virginia Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit*

Look out for this three-leafed plant! Ivy poisoning can be serious.

S.C.S. Photo

THROUGH THE SUMMER and fall when one seeks recreation out-of-doors, picnicking, tramping, fishing, hunting, or the simple pleasure of working in the yard or garden, there is, to many, the menace of skin poisoning from contact with poison ivy, poison oak, or poison sumac. The poisonous substance gets on the skin by simply brushing against any part of the plant, especially the leaves. Very severe poisoning sometimes occurs when stems of poison ivy, or either of its relatives, is put into a campfire and susceptible people stand in the smoke from the fire. This situation is especially dangerous when one is thinly clad with a lot of exposed body surface.

Poison ivy commonly grows as a vine climbing trees, walls, fences or most any upright object. It clings to structures by means of numerous small roots which arise along the stem and become firmly attached to the supporting structure. When growing on banks or a few feet from a support, it may appear to be a semi-erect shrub. The leaves of poison ivy are divided into three leaflets which appear as though there were three distinct leaves. The leaflets usually have a smooth even edge though sometimes they are a little lobed. The flowers are small, greenish, in clusters along the stem under the leaves. The fruits are in loose clusters, green when young but become creamy white upon maturity. The bunches of fruits are conspicuous, especially so after the leaves have fallen. Poison ivy is common throughout the State, but is especially abundant in the Piedmont and the mountain valleys.

Poison oak is so much like poison ivy that one need not attempt to distinguish it; however, it is a low erect shrub, one to two feet tall and does not climb. The leaflets are regularly lobed, resembling a small oak leaf. Poison oak is more frequent in the

*Release No. 51-1 of the Virginia Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit: Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, Wildlife Management Institute and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Department of the Interior), cooperating.

Piedmont, often being found in dry pine woods.

Poison sumac is very different from poison ivy or poison oak. It grows as an erect shrub or sometimes a small tree as much as 20 feet tall. The leaves are divided into seven or more leaflets in two rows along a central leaf stalk. The leaflets are smooth and green on the upper surface and whitish on the lower surface. The flower clusters are loose and on an elongated stem and the fruits are the size of a small pea, creamy white, and smooth as though they were made of porcelain. The open clusters of fruits hang down in a characteristic and conspicuous manner. There are usually a number of fruit clusters hanging down well below a group of leaves near the end of the branches. Poison sumac occurs mostly in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, usually in moist soil in swamps and near streams.

In addition to the plants mentioned, some of the spurges will cause an irritation and even blistering of sensitive skins if the broken leaves or stems are handled so that the milky sap (latex) contacts the skin. This is true of the snow-on-the-mountain and caper's spurge (sassy-Jack) both of which are planted for ornament. These, however, are not dangerous plants, but one should work with them with care. They do not cause poisoning by contact with them as is the case with poison ivy and its relatives.

Virginia creeper, a common vine, is sometimes mistaken for poison ivy. The leaf of this vine is five parted. Occasionally one finds a three leaflet form, but this is rare. Virginia creeper is not poisonous. Boston ivy, a common ornamental vine, normally has a three lobed leaf. Sometimes it occurs with its leaves divided into three leaflets. When one is uncertain as to the identity of a three-leafed plant, it is wisest to avoid it.

The fragrant sumac is a plant very closely related to the poison oak and has very much the same habit of growth; however, it is commonly in a larger clump and around three and one-half feet tall. The fruits are red instead of being cream colored as in the case of the poison oak and poison ivy. The leaves, however, are divided into three leaflets and have very much the shape of those of the poison oak. The wood is yellowish and strong scented.

Preventing ivy poisoning is a difficult problem with people having very sensitive skin. Some comfort can be obtained by applying a special protective lotion to the skin before going out. This is usually procurable from drug stores. Upon returning indoors, all exposed skin surfaces should be washed

(*Continued on page* 22)

Poison sumac grows as an erect shrub or as a small tree up to 20 feet tall. It is very poisonous.

Fragrant sumac resembles poison oak and ivy in growth, but has red berries instead of white and is non-poisonous.

Poison oak resembles poison ivy, but it is a low erect shrub and does not climb.

Virginia's Island Hatcheries

By PHILIP R. COLLINS
Chief, Special Services Section, Education Division

EGGS HAVEN'T ALWAYS cost from 50 to 60 cents a dozen in Virginia! There was a time when you could gather all the eggs you could use for free.

Long before the advent of chicken farms and hatcheries, many of the Old Dominion's early settlers obtained their breakfasts from the islands and adjoining marshes that border the Tidewater. They weren't chicken eggs but the eggs of the laughing gull. These compared favorably in size and probably in quality to those of the domestic hen.

Laughing gulls, *Larus artriculla*, arrive in Virginia around the 1st of April and nest during June and July. They live in communities whose size seems only to be governed by the area available for the construction of nests. The greatest egg laying activity usually takes place during the last two weeks in June.

Each female lays two or three eggs which vary in color from a gray to brown, and are blotched with various shades of brown and lavender. Their size is about that of a large pullet egg.

Laughing gull nests are simply hollows in tidal drift, and are composed of sea weed, marsh grass, and trash of every description. These hollows are so thick that egg clutches are seldom more than a few feet apart and often adjoin one another. Occasionally, a pair of birds become industrious and construct a conventional nest for their eggs. The parents make no attempt at concealing the nest but the eggs and young blend well into surrounding vegetation and nests. When danger approaches, the old birds do not defend their nests but simply wheel in low circles over the colony and hysterically shout their disapproval with loud high toned laughter. Young that are too weak to move remain motionless in the nest while older chicks scurry into thick vegetation or drift, and freeze to the spot in

Thousands of laughing gulls are in this view of a Virginia sea island hatchery. Nesting season brings the birds to our coast in countless numbers.

Photo by W. H. Mullins

Photo by Kesteloo

Laughing gull eggs are deposited in nests composed of sticks, seaweed, marsh grass and trash of every description.

Photo by Kesteloo

Young gulls are extremely well camouflaged in the nest. Careless observers sometimes step on the hidden youngsters.

order to avoid detection. When examining a colony, the observer must step carefully to avoid treading on these flightless creatures.

A pair of gulls often have a difficult time in bringing off their broods. High winds and high tides sometimes wipe out whole colonies of young birds and unhatched eggs. When this happens, the birds usually lay more eggs in a second attempt at raising a family, but all nesting is normally completed by mid July.

Before the practice was outlawed, some coast and island dwellers substantially increased their larders by robbing laughing gull colonies. As soon as egg laying began, each colony was visited and the contents of all nests with more than one egg was destroyed. The colonies were then revisited every one or two days and the eggs laid by birds attempting to reestablish clutches were systematically gathered. This method insured the gatherer of robbing only fresh eggs. Egg gatherers obtained so great a plunder that they were able to salt the eggs down by the barrel and sold both fresh and salted eggs in city markets for substantial profits.

As was so often the case with other species of wildlife in our early history, this exploitation and plunder nearly resulted in the extirpation of this beautiful gull. Only legislation and careful enforcement have saved this species from the fate of the passenger pigeon. It is the only gull nesting on the south Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the United States, and since its protection, it has been able to make a welcome comeback and is again plentiful.

During the breeding season and summer months, the laughing gull is a handsome bird with its dark gray mantle, black head, white spectacles, and faint rosy tinge on its snowy breast. Its song, if it can be accurately called such, is like the feigned high pitched laugh of a woman.

Laughing gulls often follow ships far out to sea, feeding on the waste cast overboard. Passengers while away many hours watching them soar and dip as they glide along beside the ship or splash into the sea in search of their fare. Chesapeake Bay during the summer would seem desolate without them and ferry crossings would be much less interesting.

These graceful birds have more than aesthetic value, they help keep the beaches and harbors clean. Laughing gulls eat nearly anything—small fish, offal, garbage, worms, insects, crabs, and other small animal life. They glean the beaches and harbors. Little escapes their sharp eyes.

In addition to their value as scavengers, the gulls aid farmers in controlling insects. Laughing gulls can often be seen in large flocks, covering whole fields, standing rank on rank, like soldiers in a skirmish line, all facing into the wind, and on guard for any unlucky insect that may fly into the field. An individual, spying his prey, will flutter after it and after gobbling it down will again assume his position in the formation. At dusk, the birds remind one of flights of fighter aircraft returning from successful missions as they gracefully soar into roosting areas for the night.

During the fall most of the laughing gulls that nest along Virginia's coast migrate southward to the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. Many fly as far as Chile and Brazil. If it were not for the southward movement of other shorebirds and

waterfowl that summer in the north, Virginia's islands and marshes would be almost birdless and desolate during the fall and winter months. Fortunately, nature has provided us with beautiful wildfowl the year around. Back Bay, Chesapeake Bay, and other expanses of water are covered by huge flocks of ducks and geese, some migrant, others winter residents, that provide Virginia's sportsmen with many enjoyable and healthful days in the field.

With the coming of spring, laughing gulls return to Virginia's shores, replacing the wintering birds that have again moved north. Dressed in their nuptial plumage, they announce their arrival on the breeding grounds with hysterical laughter, and soon offshore islands and marshes are once more Virginia's island hatcheries.

PLANNING FOR PROGRESS

(*Continued from page* 11)

an important part in the lives of their ancestors.

Under the cooperative concept followed in Virginia, technicians of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries have been welcomed into land and resource planning phases of National Forest programs. On the other hand forest managers who normally encounter many problems stemming from wildlife pressure, are accorded a voice in creation of seasons, bag limits and other phases of game administration. Working together the two groups have developed a joint understanding of multiple use forest management that provides an atmosphere for frank and effective consideration and action. This has been accomplished without violating the administrative integrity of either organization.

The cooperative wildlife area in Virginia was recently described as: "The biggest hunting and fishing preserve in the country. The only dues are the modest annual license fees." The author of the statement was Executive Director I. T. Quinn of the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.

POISON IVY

(*Continued from page* 19)

thoroughly with a strong laundry soap. The surfaces should be lathered thoroughly several times, each lathering being washed off in running water. Clothing and tools which have been in contact with poison ivy should not be handled until they also have been washed thoroughly. Around the home and places frequented by people, all poison ivy should be destroyed. It may be eradicated by digging it out or it may be killed with a weed killer. Ammonium sulphamate applied to the leaves will penetrate into the stem and roots, killing the plant, but the plant may have to be treated two or three times before it is killed completely. Three-quarters of a pound of ammonium sulphamate to a gallon of water is a satisfactory strength when sprayed on the leaves. If new leaves develop, spray again. The spray will kill other plants except grasses, and if the ivy is growing among plants which should not be injured, the ammonium sulphamate solution may be applied to each leaf by a cloth wetted with it. A person treating poison ivy in this manner should wear rubber gloves and afterwards the gloves and exposed skin should be washed thoroughly with strong soap or baking soda. Further, if ammonium sulphamate is applied as a spray, the sprayer must be washed thoroughly afterwards, using water with lime in it.

When gathering wood for the outdoor fire, avoid vines, especially those clinging to tree trunks or limbs. Just to be on the safe side after an outing, when one has been where there is or may be poison ivy or its relatives, the skin of exposed parts should be washed thoroughly with a good laundry soap or by rubbing baking soda thoroughly over the wet skin, washing this off and repeating.

The wisest step in treating ivy poisoning is to consult a physician; however, there are preparations on the market for relieving those suffering from such poisoning. Calamine lotion is commonly used and there are many others. A person who is especially sensitive should consult his physician as to how he can best protect himself as, in some instances, injections may be used to good advantage with individuals who are super-sensitive to ivy poisoning.

FARMER LOOKS AT WILDLIFE

(*Continued from page* 17)

out of these areas? It is a known and proven fact that in all regions where such an area has been established, towns, industry, business and jobs have sprung up where before only a few scattered families once lived.

Yes, the time is not far in the future when the man with the rod and gun will have to find his enjoyment in vast public recreational areas, and will shoot nice fat game, which have been scientifically bred for speed and quality meat, and fast growing tender fish that know how to fight at the end of a rod—and ducks?—unlimited! And the sportsmen would not object to reasonable license fees for the use of such areas.

Field Force Notes

Education Division Adds Special Services Man

Philip R. Collins, a trained wildlife man, has been employed by the Commission to head the Special Services section of the Education Division.

Mr. Collins is well qualified for his work. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry from the University of Michigan and a Master of Forestry degree with a major in wildlife management from the same institution.

Philip R. Collins

In his work as Special Services officer, Mr. Collins will instruct in wildlife management at many of the summer camps provided for boys and girls. During the winter months he will work with Virginia schools, sportsmen's clubs, civic groups and others.

He is married, has two children, and is a veteran with 5 years active commissioned army service before and during World War II.

Game Commission Authorizes Second Bear Hunt in Southwest

One bear was killed on Walker's Mountain during the second bear hunt authorized by the Game Commission after complaints were made that more sheep had been killed in Rich Valley.

Smyth County Game Warden Woodrow Newman supervised the group of 150 men and 40 dogs that trailed bears throughout the day. Three bears were seen and one killed about two miles from Hungry Mother State Park. The dead bear weighed 326 pounds.

Bill Shelburne and "Lum" Brooks of Tazewell took their pack of 14 bear dogs to Smyth to hunt down the marauding bear.

Upon application of the sheep owners, special permission was granted for running down the killers in the protected area of the Jefferson National Forest.

Soon after being unleashed the dogs hit the trail and jumped, not one bear, but two bears, that were bedded down in a bed of laurel on cliffs about half way up the side of the mountain near the carcasses of five sheep they had killed.

One bear was killed by a hunter from adjoining Wythe County, Allen Stower, of Rural Retreat, whose fusillade of 18 shots from his repeating rifle succeeded in striking his target just behind the left shoulder hitting the heart.

The other bear managed to elude his pursuers, however, and got away.

Forty-seven sheep have fallen victim to the marauding animals in the past few months.

Game Warden Walter Hampton of Grayson County and his deputy, John Emerson, assisted in the hunt.

Game Division Adds Two New Field Men

Two new wildlife technicians have been added to the staff of the Commission's Game Division, bringing to 9 the number of biologists now in the field.

Charles P. Gilchrist, Jr.

James W. Engle, Jr.

The new men are James W. Engle, Jr. and Charles P. Gilchrist, Jr. Both men hold master's degrees in wildlife from V.P.I. Mr. Engle will work on the George Washington National Forest and will have his headquarters near Staunton. Mr. Gilchrist will work on marsh management and on farm game in the northeastern section of the Tidewater and will operate out of Tappahannock.

Both men saw commissioned service in World War II. Engle with the Navy and Gilchrist with the Marines.

Eugene Surber Goes to New Post

Word comes to us here at Virginia Wildlife that Eugene Surber, chief of the Eastern Fish Cultural Investigations of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service located for 18 years at the Federal Fish Hatchery in Kearneysville, West Virginia, has accepted a position as chief regional biologist for the U. S. Public Health Service. Chicago will be Surber's headquarters.

Cow Elk Picks Blue Ridge Parkway For Maternity Ward

While working along the Blue Ridge Parkway in the vicinity of the Peaks of Otter on June 27, National Park Warden Wellington Luck witnessed an unusual incident. A cow elk had chosen a spot within a hundred yards of the road as a "maternity ward" and proceeded to have her calf right there.

Five hours old and a little wobbly in the legs—a new Virginia citizen surveys his Blue Ridge home.

When the calf was about 5 hours old, Mr. Luck took two pictures of it, one of which is reproduced here. The mother elk made no attempt to interfere.

The following day the cow and calf had disappeared. An examination of the area showed that a space approximately 5 feet square had been trampled down forming an enclosure. It appeared as though the cow had bedded down for a day or so in advance of the birth. The ground was well "hoofed" and some of the blackberry shoots were dead and dry.

National Forest Host To Summer Vacationists

Reports from the George Washington National Forest indicate that weekend use of the recreational facilities and areas available to the public within the forest was larger this year than at any other period since their establishment.

The Sherando Lake recreation area is receiving increasing crowds each day who avail themselves of the opportunities to enjoy the swimming, camping and picnicking which the area has to offer.

The Elizabeth Furnace recreation areas in Powell's Fort Valley are also in heavy use by picknickers and campers.

Correction

Last month's center pictorial spread on SKISH lists the Tidewater Anglers Club of Norfolk as the sponsors of the Skish tournament. We have been in error. This should read Virginia Peninsula Sportsmen's Association. We beg pardon!

Franklin County Warden Has Fish Dynamiting Problem

Game Warden Gordon T. Preston says that dynamiting of fish is becoming a serious problem in Franklin County.

Several reports of dynamiting in the Brooks Mill section of the Blackwater River have been received by the warden and a close watch is being kept on the area.

Although the warden has some information on persons suspected of doing the dynamiting, the guilty parties must actually be caught or seen in the act in order to be convicted in court.

Yale and Towne Plant Plays Fair With Sportsmen

A real spirit of cooperation with the sportsmen of Virginia was recently displayed by officials of the Yale and Towne Manufacturing Company's plant in Salem. Last year an acid solution was accidentally introduced into the Roanoke river from the plant, and several hundred fish died in the waters downstream from the factory. The company at that time

Yale and Towne plant manager Leo Pantas, Game warden George Harmon, Salem Town Manager W. Frank Chapman, County Izaak Walton League president T. C. Melton, and Salem's recreation director J. M. Stephens, Jr., watch a hatchery worker release fish in the Roanoke River.

promptly assumed that the acid was the fish killer, and plant manager Leo Pantas immediately announced that the firm would undertake to replace the lost fish.

In fulfillment of this promise, two thousand 2 to 3 inch fingerling large and smallmouth bass were recently restocked into the stream by the company. In addition to making good the original fish loss, Mr. Pantas stated that the company is thinking of doing some restocking every year.

OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION ENDORSES CONSERVATION EDUCATION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

At their recent annual meeting held at Moosehead Lake in Maine, the Outdoor Writers Association of America went on record with the following resolution:

WHEREAS: The youth of the nation will be our future conservationists, and

WHEREAS: the Outdoor Writers Association of America recognizes the importance of conservation training in the formative years to provide for an awakened appreciation of the necessity for and benefits from adequate conservation programs, and

WHEREAS: many states are already providing for boys and girls to have such training, not only in the classroom, but also in the outdoor camp laboratories under supervision of trained personnel, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Outdoor Writers Association of America go on record as urging educational authorities to establish conservation education in schools, and encourage the training of personnel in the necessary techniques of instruction in the classroom and in the out-of-doors, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Outdoor Writers Association of America recommend that instruction be planned to give pupils an appreciation of conservation in the fields of tree planting and forestry, soil and water conservation, fish and wildlife and related subjects; and that where possible, courses include a period of instruction under trained personnel in camps or such out-of-doors sites as provide opportunity for practical demonstration of the principles and practices involved.

* * *

AMERICAN FORESTERS VOTE AGAINST FEDERAL CONTROL

The nation's professional foresters have gone on record, by more than two to one, as opposing federal regulation of privately-owned forest lands. The Society of American Foresters has just announced the result of a secret-ballot referendum. Of the 3,652 members voting, 2,545 members opposed, and 1,107 favored the principle of federal regulation.

The Society of American Foresters, organized in Washington, D. C. in 1900, is a professional organization composed of technically trained foresters, who are actively engaged, either for government or for private industry, in maintaining and protecting the country's timberlands.

* * *

SMOKEY BEAR FILM TRAILERS FOR MOVIE, TELEVISION USE AVAILABLE FROM U. S. F. S.

New educational materials for forest fire prevention made available by the U. S. Forest Service include three Smokey Bear film trailers for movie or television use.

The films, "Once Upon A Time," "It's Up To You," and "Don't Blame Lightning," have running times of four and one-half minutes, three minutes, and one minute, respectively. They are available in 16 mm. and 35 mm.

Production of the films was sponsored by the Advertising Council, Inc.

Also released recently were, "Smokey Bear's Story of the Forest," a 15-page color book for children, and "Forest and Flame in the Bible," selected Bible passages on protection of the forests.

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MORE TREES FOR VIRGINIA CONTEST DRAWS 571 ENTRANTS

A total of 571 farmers have entered the second "More Trees for Virginia" forestry contest, according to a recent announcement by William E. Cooper, executive director of Virginia Forests, Inc., sponsors of the contest in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Education.

Entries for this year's contest are six times greater in number than last year, Mr. Cooper stated.

Purpose of the contest, open only to veterans and farmers enrolled in vocational agriculture classes, is to encourage young farm owners or operators to improve their farm woodlands. Prizes totaling $500 in U. S. Savings Bonds will be given contestants doing the best job of improving a designated three-acre woodland area. The contest ends Dec. 31, 1950.

for
Students
Teachers
Parents

HERE IT IS September and school bells are ringing again. Summer vacation is just a memory until next year, but that nature study and conservation you learned at summer camp doesn't have to be stored away and forgotten. Now is the time to start thinking about that Junior Wildlife Club at *your* school.

Plans are under way here at the Special Services Section of the Game Commission's Education Division to work with any and all Junior Wildlife Clubs whether sponsored by schools, Boy Scouts, 4-H groups, F. F. A., or civic organizations. Membership cards and buttons are being designed and will be ready for distribution sometime this fall. Monthly wildlife conservation projects will be mailed to the clubs and Game Commission personnel will cooperate whenever possible. In addition, the Commission's film library will be open for bookings by the Junior Wildlife Clubs if they are under responsible adult supervision.

To set up your Junior Wildlife Club, find some responsible adult who will act as the club advisor and project leader. In schools, your biology teacher should be the natural selection for this because of his or her natural science background. Call a meeting to organize your club and hold an election of officers. You should have a president, vice-president, secretary, and a treasurer to function adequately. When you've gotten the election out of the way, you've got to have a constitution and by-laws. Keep them simple! Just state the necessary things like purpose of club, officers and length of term, and membership dues, if any. You might state your purpose something like this:

"The Blank Junior Wildlife Club is formed in order to encourage learning about our native wildlife, and to help and work with all responsible public and private agencies and persons in the conservation of all our natural resources."

When your club has been formed, have your advisor write to Mr. Philip R. Collins, chief of the Special Services Section, Education Division, Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, 7 North 2nd Street, Richmond, Virginia, for chapter recognition, giving full particulars as to membership, sponsoring organization, advisor's name and address, meetings, etc.

A chapter certificate, membership cards, and the first club project will be sent right away and you can start right in on your organized conservation work. Let us hear from you.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

There are few people in Virginia who have not seen a brown thrasher. Almost every brier and honeysuckle thicket has a nesting pair of thrashers in the spring.

Brown Thrasher

A russet brown bird with a spotted breast, it is often called the "brown thrush" by many people. Although it does resemble the thrush somewhat, it has a much longer tail and belongs to the *Mimidae*, an entirely different family which also includes the catbird and the mockingbird. The thrasher's song differs from that of the other members of the family, in that he generally repeats everything twice, whereas the catbird seldom repeats and the mockingbird repeats five or six times.

Nests are built in heavy tangles, somewhere in the lower growth within a few feet of the ground. They are bulky structures made of twigs, leaves, and bark and lined inside with rootlets.

Three to six greenish white, brown dotted eggs are laid and are incubated for about two weeks with both the male and female taking turns sitting on the eggs.

The young birds stay in the nest for 10 to 12 days and are fed on berries and wild fruits.

The major portion of the thrasher's diet throughout the year is insects and because of this he is a real friend to the farmer. If you have thrashers near your home, count them as an asset. They'll help cut down the bug population during the months they stay with you.

ESSAY CONTEST

On the inside back cover you will find the announcement of the 4th Annual Wildlife Essay Contest sponsored by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Izaak Walton League of Virginia.

Make your plans to enter this contest now!

Announcing!!

The 4th Annual Wildlife Essay Contest

$1,000.00

in Prizes

TEACHERS: Enter your school now! Write for free reference material!

SPONSORED JOINTLY BY: The Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League of America and the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.

DATE: **OCTOBER 15, 1950 TO FEBRUARY 28, 1951.**

SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE: Only Virginia schools, elementary and high, grades 5-12 inclusive will be eligible to enter this contest.

SUBJECT: **The Importance of Wildlife Conservation and Related Resources.**

CONTEST RULES

1. Essays must be submitted through the schools participating and each essay must contain a minimum of 500 words.

2. Each entry should bear the following information in the upper right-hand corner of each essay: name, sex, age, grade, address, school, county, and teacher.

3. Students of Virginia schools, grades 5-12 inclusive, will be eligible to enter this contest.

4. ALL essays must be mailed first class, prepaid, to **ESSAY CONTEST HEADQUARTERS, Box 1642, Richmond, Virginia.** Deadline for submission of entries is midnight, February 28, 1951. Each school must mail essays from all grades at one time.

5. No papers will be returned and the decision of the judges will be final. Each sponsoring organization will appoint two conservationists to serve on the judging committee.

57 PRIZES!

Eight grand prizes, $50 each, one for each grade, totaling	**$400**
Eight second prizes, $25 each, one for each grade, totaling	**$200**
Eight third prizes, $15 each, one for each grade, totaling	**$120**
Sixteen honorable mention prizes, $10 each, two for each grade, totaling	**$160**
Sixteen special mention prizes, $5 each, two for each grade, totaling	**$80**
One school prize, best response	**$40**
Grand total	**$1000**

There will be seven prizes in each of the eight competing grades. Grand prize winners will come to Richmond as guests of the sponsors to receive their awards. Others will be given awards in the schools. The school having the best response will be given a special $40 prize for its athletic or general purpose fund.

FOXES, LIKE DOGS, BURY FOOD FOR FUTURE USE

THE WOLF, LYNX AND EAGLE ARE ENEMIES OF THE FOX

RED FOX

THE FOX BELONGS TO THE DOG FAMILY, BUT THE PUPIL OF HIS EYE IS ELLIPTICAL

SILVER FOX IS A DARK PHASE OF THE RED FOX